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Text:

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Garden Grove adult education programs face the axe

By DEEPA BHARATH
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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ARTICLE **DATA**

GARDEN GROVE – School district officials say they are getting ready to wind down the district's long-running adult education program – another casualty of the state budget crisis and lack of education funding.

At tonight's meeting, school board members will give notice to three adult education teachers, including a special education teacher with a program for developmentally disabled students at Chapman Adult Education Center.

The Adults with Disabilities program, which has 37 participants, will be shut down by the end of the school year if other alternatives do not work out, said Garden Grove Unified spokesman Alan Trudell. The program is free to participants.

"This was a tough decision for the district and it is being reluctantly done," Trudell said about the cuts. "It is simply a reflection of the economic times we live in."

The district's projected cuts for 2010-11 are \$59.3 million. Trudell said that number could change depending on a number of factors.

"It is a moving target that is based on the worst-case scenario of projected revenues and maximum projected costs," he said.

The district's priority, during this time of crisis, is to maintain those programs that are relevant to students successfully graduating from high school, such as GED and ESL programs, he said.

Parents who have adult children enrolled in the disabilities program say they are worried.

Bonnie Wheatfill's 38-year-old daughter, Kristin, has attended the program for three years.

"She couldn't tell the time, but now she can use computers, do e-mail and even has a Facebook account," she said.

Participants in the program did a number of constructive activities such as cooking and crafts, Wheatfill said. But the optional computer program died when fees were introduced earlier this year, Wheatfill said.

"The fees went higher and higher in just nine

Story Highlights

The school board tonight will look at eliminating adult education programs in the face of a budgetary crisis

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weeks and a lot of people dropped out," she said.

Wheatfill says she is worried about where these disabled adults are going to go if this program shuts down on June 17, as parents were informed in a letter sent out January.

"Some of these students are in their 50s," she said. "They don't even have parents. What are they going to do?"

Trudell said the fate of the program has not been sealed just yet, although the district is taking the steps needed to close it down.

"If it can exist as a fee-based program or if we have another agency that is interested in taking it over, it could continue," he said. "We're still looking at alternatives."

The district will also do away with a cosmetology program by 2011, which will be sufficient time for enrolled students to complete their program, Trudell said. The disabled adults program will remain free to participants through June, he said.

The Garden Grove Unified school board meets at 7 p.m. in the District Boardroom, 10331 Stanford Ave. Information: 714-663-6000.

Contact the writer: 714-796-7909 or dbharath@ocregister.com

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fourcrows wrote:

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3/2/2010 11:34 AM PST

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timscavo wrote:

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